

West Coast and Northern Areas D&T Hub Conference 2022 – Coober Pedy

Sun 13th - Mon 14th November

written by **Gavin Hammond**, in consultation with **Jemima McLachlan, Steve Kuerschner, Geoff Schulze,**

Hosted by **Michelle Patterson** of Coober Pedy Area School and attended by **Stephen Butler** from Roxby Downs, **Geoff Schulze** and **Steve Kuerschner** of Port Augusta, PRT **Colin McColl** from Quorn, **Jemima McLachlan** of Cowell, **Tom Manners** and **Michael Pearce** from Ceduna, **Ty Redden** from Streaky Bay, **Matt Thursby** and **Sam Irvine** from Whyalla, **Greg Griffiths** from Swan Reach, and **Gavin Hammond** from Tumby Bay.

The purpose of this written report is to briefly document the event to inform others and provide a record of the activities and content of our annual conference.

Most of our attendees spent most of the day on Saturday travelling to our outback destination and caught up for tea at the local Roadhouse. Sunday morning started at 9am in the workshop for a coffee and chat. The reunion soon evolved into a Resin Workshop led by **Michelle**.

We had a wide range of options to colour and decorate the resin and were able to incorporate offcuts of timber and even chips of opal. The resin creations were left to set as morning tea approached and we then headed off for our first excursion. The tour of *Umoona Mine* gave us a real sense of the history of Coober Pedy and the opal mining industry.

After lunch at the Outback Bar and Grill, we hopped back into the bus for a tour of the town, which included a visit to the beautiful Serbian Orthodox underground church and the *Old Timers Mine*.

Upon returning to the school workshop, we moved into the theory room for **Michelle's** demonstration of the *Cricut* CNC machine. After learning about the software and the hardware capabilities, some of us trialled it by designing logos and labels to press onto fabrics, while others worked with the *Emblaser II* Laser cutter/engraver.

The evening was rounded out nicely with a lovely dinner at The Big Winch, which was followed by a black lighting session. This involved searching through mullock heaps with a black light, looking for glowing rocks with the potential to find opal. Needless to say, none of us found enough to quit our beloved day-jobs!

Monday began in the workshop again as the Coober Pedy school started its daily classroom routines. Most of us got busy removing our resin castings from their moulds and began the process of shaping and polishing. There were some beautiful outcomes, which included pendants, rings, serviette rings drink coasters and cheese boards.

After our morning coffee and bikkies, we settled into our traditional "show & tell" session. This included:

- **Michelle**, with a picnic table for wine glasses and custom-made workbooks for her students.
- **Geoff**, with a plasma-cut fire pit/BBQ made by the Pt Augusta Prison with customised cut-outs.
- **Gavin**, with a campfire barbecue and steel desk-tidy.
- **Greg**, with a serviette holder and Year 7/8 design folio task sheets

Once our sandwiches arrived from the local bakery. We moved into the theory room for a feed and casual chats. This soon became a more formal discussion and a computer-based, show & tell. Topics discussed and shared included:

- **Steve K**, with his Stage 1 & 2 SACE projects, their respective design folios, and the investigation tasks. This led to discussion about grading and moderation and SACE achievement standards.
- General discussion followed with the sharing of experiences and examples of the Department for Education EDI Units of Work for the Design & Technologies area.
- **Jemima** shared a strategic chart for tracking progression for writing improvement. She also discussed how she incorporates Tier 2 and 3 words for D&T vocabulary development. Her templates and information sheets for scaffolding writing tasks and assisting students to be more concise were also welcomed by us all. **Jemima** also generated some discussion on legalities associated with student projects and engineering compliance.
- Documentation of the Design and Realisation Process by providing a step-by-step approach was also discussed at length.
- **Gavin** shared his work in using Edpuzzle to provide guided video demonstrations with embedded questions. He also gave a preview of various files added to our shared folder, which generated more discussion. These included safe-work practices and documenting machine access for students, and metalwork theory to support skills with knowledge & understanding.
- **Ty** shared more writing support materials with a special PowerPoint presentation. He also shared his version of the machine documentation for students and a structure used to scaffold students in writing their Stage 2 DT&E Resource Study. We also witnessed an exemplar of an A+ standard Design Folio that generated valuable discussion.
- More writing strategies were shared by **Tom** to further enhance the conversation on this topic.

Most people then took the opportunity to visit the dug-out of a Coober Pedy resident and we were all amazed at how beautiful and luxurious the home was.

We all agreed with **Jemima's** proposal on behalf of the PLHS D&T staff, for a Port Lincoln based Hub Conference for 2023. We thanked **Michelle** for hosting this annual event and recognised the importance of these get-togethers for us as regionally based D&T teachers, most of whom are in single-teacher faculties.

The event finished with an excellent meal at the local pizza restaurant, where we farewelled each other for a good night's sleep to prepare for the long trip home on Tuesday. We would like to acknowledge the hours of work put in by **Michelle Patterson** of Coober Pedy Area School and are grateful for the support of the school for providing the facilities, materials and refreshments.